

# FLATHEAD COUNTY LONG RANGE PLANNING TASK FORCE

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## MEETING MINUTES (unapproved) Wednesday, October 11, 2007

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### Welcome/Introductions/Roll Call

- Meeting called to order at 4:15 p.m.

#### Members Present

Chuck Roady  
Diana Blend  
Gary Hall  
Gordon Cross  
Jeff Harris  
Jennifer Gerber  
Karen Reeves  
Kerry Finley  
Marcia Sheffels  
Mike Pence  
Myrt Webb  
Turner Askew  
Velvet Phillips-Sullivan

#### Members Absent

Bill Shaw  
Bob Horne  
Dave Taylor  
Dennis Hester  
Guy Foy  
Jane Leivo  
Jed Fisher  
Jim Patrick  
Joe Russell  
Mike Meehan  
Pam Kennedy  
Richard Surynt  
Tom Jentz

#### Others

Clara Hazelwood  
Chuck Sieler

### Agenda Approval

- Chuck Roady moved to approve the agenda, Diana Blend seconded, all approved.

### Minutes Approval

- Mike Pence moved to approve the minutes from last meeting, Jeff Harris seconded, all approved.

### Old Business

#### Land Use Committee Report – Myrt Webb

Myrt asked the Task Force for feedback regarding the Land Use Committee's Report:

Jeff Harris

Regarding the wildfire risk at the top of page 7 of the report: In the last legislation, there was a bill passed that amended the growth policy where we are now required to address the wildland urban interface. Jeff recommends that the committee review/update the map and run it through the committee before having it added to the growth policy.

Gary Hall

In the Finding section under Protecting Views, Gary recommends that the language be changed as follows:

FROM:

- Since commercial development is *unrestricted* along major transportation corridors, it is harming important community view-sheds, increasing traffic and degrading air quality.

TO:

- Since commercial development is *managed only in zoned areas* along major transportation corridors, it is harming important community view-sheds and increasing traffic.

Also, in the Discussion section under Protecting Views, Gary recommends that the following change be made:

FROM:

The most valuable views are the views from US2 and US93 north of Kalispell. They are valuable simply because the traffic study shows that thousands of people use them. View-shed pollution has occurred in many places but it still not widespread. These corridors *can* be saved.

TO:

The most valuable views are the views from US2 and US93 north of Kalispell. They are valuable simply because the traffic study shows that thousands of people use them. View-shed pollution has occurred in many places but it still not widespread. These corridors *should* be saved.

Under the Recommendations section, Gary recommends that it be changed as follows:

FROM:

- Form "Scenic View Corridors" *at least ½ mile wide* along US2 and US93 north of Kalispell.
- Within the corridor establish architectural design standards that would mitigate the effect of new buildings on the view-shed. Encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments in corridor areas.
- Encourage the use of conservation easements.
- Plan for the establishment of commercial areas where development would not degrade views or disrupt traffic on arterials.

TO:

- Form "Scenic View Corridors" ~~at least ½ mile wide~~ along US2 and US93 north of Kalispell.
- Within the corridor establish architectural design guidelines standards that would mitigate the effect of new buildings on the view-shed. Encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments in corridor areas.
- Encourage the use of conservation easements.
- Plan for the establishment of commercial areas where development would not degrade views or disrupt traffic on arterials.

Karen Reeves

What does the community want the future to be for the county? What do we want our corridors to look like twenty years from now? Not all highways should be okay for commercial.

Gary Hall

The work that county and cities are doing is progressive, restrictive and difficult for some people to swallow. This can be addressed by developing architectural design guidelines for highway corridors.

Turner Askew

Something people overlook is that houses do not pay their way, commercial pays the way and uses fewer services than housing. Unless a city has a commercial base, it cannot afford to function. Guidelines should show what kind of commercial development is allowed (not mini-storage for example), have it include commercial buildings that are not visually objectionable.

Velvet Phillips-Sullivan

Are we talking about architectural “standards” or “guidelines”? One is seen as enforceable, the other as guidance.

Jeff Harris

Let’s take the first step and prepare something that lays out what we want to see happen to the commercial areas architecturally – then determine best way to implement. Once we see what is prepared, we can determine if standards or guidelines are appropriate.

Myrt Webb

The Land Use Committee is saying this is the least we ought to do in response to people’s concerns about the views. We should establish corridors and have standards as per the intent of the growth policy.

Diana Blend

Under the Recommendations section, Diana recommends that the following be changed:

FROM:

- Within the corridor establish architectural design guidelines that would mitigate the effect of new buildings on the view-shed. Encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments in corridor areas.

TO:

- Within the corridor establish architectural *and landscape* design guidelines that would mitigate the effect of new buildings on the view-shed. Encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments in corridor areas.

*More discussion ensued relative to whether guidelines or standards should be developed. Committee voted and “Standards” won the vote.*

Diana moved that the Task Force accept the Land Use Committee recommendations and forward them on to the county commissioners. Marsha seconded.

Discussion

Gary: Big thanks to the Land Use Committee for their hard work.

Jeff Harris – advises that the committee presents a formal presentation to commissioners and planning board.

Send copy of the report in advance to give them time to absorb.

All approved the motion.

#### **Affordable Housing Committee Report – Diana Blend**

Diana introduced Lynn Moon – housing manager for City of Kalispell, Director for Glacier Affordable Housing and a member of ETHIC. Lynn contributed to the development of the Affordable Housing Committee Report.

Diana advises that the Task Force read the report over the next week or two and send her any edits.

Diana provided highlights of the committee’s report:

The report provides an understandable definition of Affordable Housing:

*The generally accepted definition of affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and health care insurance.*

*For those persons owning their homes, the housing costs includes principal, interest, taxes and insurance and, when applicable, condominium or homeowners' association fees. For renters, the costs simply include the monthly rent payment, regardless of whether or not that rent payment includes utilities paid by the landlord.*

Primary recommendations of the Affordable Housing Committee are:

- 1) Flathead County should act as a sponsor to seek funding including grants for affordable housing; and
- 2) The County should provide land use based incentives and density bonuses for the promotion and development of affordable housing opportunities; and
- 3) Flathead County should financially support the creation of a community land trust to provide a permanent inventory of affordable housing.

Several examples were provided in the report.

Lynn Moon

Workforce housing is at 80-100% of median. There is little opportunity for affordable housing. We all need to partner (public and private).

Gary

During some economic development discussions he hears that some large companies have looked elsewhere because there is no workforce here.

Diana

80% using average income would allow \$133,000 for housing. Lowest cost 2 bedroom townhome is \$143,000. These gaps will continue to expand to include more people.

Lynn

Whitefish is already there

Myrt Webb

It would be useful to know how many units we need at what income level to make a difference. This would provide a better scope of the problem.

Lynn Moon

We can get that information.

New Business:

**OPD (Overall Development Plan) – BJ Grieve**

BJ gave a presentation on the Development Predictability Map (DPM):

One of the things learned from the Growth Policy public meetings was that there was a lack of willingness to accept traditional use based zoning in Flathead County. In other words, “the government should not say what I can or cannot do on my properties.”

Land owners didn’t know what they could or could not do on their land – e.g. what density is allowed? The DPM evolved from this concern.

Lack of predictability impacts...

- Landowners – they don’t know what they can do with land
- Neighbors – they don’t see development coming
- Surveyors engineers etc – costs money
- Planners don’t know what to tell people or how to plan for growth
- Officials take heat for decisions
- Service providers can’t anticipate growth and demand
- Also impacts community efficiency, safety, health, etc.

DPM – what is it?

A compromise:

- Not land use zoning, design standards, etc.
- Not “I can do whatever I want, period” or development free-for-all.

Density guidance in unzoned areas:

- Promotes efficiency
- Promotes predictability
- Amendments are easier to understand and less subjective
- Deals with density alone so if you are not subdividing – not affected.

What’s the process?

1) Choose “drivers”

Make a list of criteria that impacts appropriate densities of development. Begin with goals and policies, refine list, through public meetings and discussions with service providers.

2) Choose density categories

Start with those in the growth policy, refine through public process.

3) Set thresholds

In a public process, educate on impact of each density category, and then ask appropriate units of each density to each driver. (e.g. wildfire hazard, distance to arterials)

4) Map thresholds

4a) Use CommunityViz to display driver thresholds for every parcel in Flathead County. (e.g. distance to schools, fire stations)

5) Combine mapped thresholds to produce DPM

Use CommunityViz tool to assign point structure based on compliance with thresholds. Create a map to show thresholds.

Another tool we’re thinking of is called an “Overall Development Plan” (ODP). It is like a neighborhood plan for a project development. Subdivision regulations have a hard time addressing

larger areas, so ODPs can create a new plan for their project and get it approved so they have an entitlement

Also once plan is in place they propose their own zoning to implement this plan.

### Architectural Design Standards Discussion

Gary Hall

Need to have a committee that works on this. Potential members include:

- Landscape architect
- North 93 group member
- Business owners on the highway
- LRPTF members
- Architect
- Developer
- Larger property owners
- Surveyor
- Representative from Kalispell, Evergreen, Big Fork, Whitefish and Columbia Falls

This committee will be responsible for developing architectural design standards for highway corridors and gateways.

Discussion:

Jeff motions that the Task Force makes a recommendation to the commission to solicit and create a Highway Corridor Architectural Standards Committee. The commission would appoint advisory committee to prepare arch design standards in conjunction with the LRPTF.

Myrt seconded.

All were in favor.

### Task Force Discussion / Set Next Meeting Date

Next meeting November 8<sup>th</sup> at 4pm.

Task Force reports need to go directly to the Commissioners. Once they approve it the Commissioners are responsible for getting it to the planning board.

Possible Agenda Topics for Next Meeting:

- Affordable Housing Report
- Donut areas
- Bob Horne's membership
- New Members (some will be going off at the end of the year)
- Richard and Diana need to be replaced
- Bob Horne can re apply for a position once advertised.

From September 2006 minutes, staggered terms were drawn as follows:

3 year terms

Jane Leivo, Myrt Webb

2 year terms:

Karen Reeves, Chuck Roady

1 year terms:

Richard Surynt, Diana Blend

## **Public Comment Period**

➤ No comment

## **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 5:55